

Joint Committee on Transportation
Coos Bay Public Hearing
Marshfield High School
August 7, 2024

I am a resident of Coos Bay and a member of the Bay Area Chamber of Commerce Transportation Committee, and I'm the Immediate Past President of the Association of Oregon Rail and Transit Advocates (AORTA).

As a member of the Chamber of Commerce I support all modes of transportation. My testimony today is as an individual, and my comments have not been reviewed by the Chamber.

Rail transportation, both freight and passenger, has many economic, social and environmental benefits. I am an advocate for both freight and passenger rail.

Our nearest passenger rail hub is Eugene, more than 100 miles from Coos Bay. Presently, we have a two-seat ride between Coos Bay and Eugene using county transit systems in Coos and Lane counties with a transfer between systems in Florence. A one seat ride would be desirable.

The Federal Bipartisan Infrastructure Bill provides a lot of money for transportation, but Oregon doesn't have a passenger rail fund that can help attract those federal funds. AORTA is a member of the Oregon Transit Association, and I support its legislative concept to increase the STIF Transit tax.

AORTA recommends adding a one tenth of one percent increase to the OTA proposal as a dedicated fund for Statewide Intercity Transit (Bus, Rail and Commuter Rail). This will also improve regional connectivity

I support more frequent service in the Cascades Corridor between Eugene and Vancouver, BC. This will make passenger trains more useful for Oregonians and will open new markets for tourism visits to Oregon.

Finally, I strongly support planning and other activities to restore passenger train service to Eastern Oregon, such as the Federal Railroad Administration proposal for interstate service between Seattle and Denver.

Thank you for your attention to these comments.

Arthur Poole